



Members of the Colorado B.A.S.S. Nation joined with volunteers from other organizations to add valuable fish habitat to Colorado's Boyd Lake. Submitted photo

Colorado Nation completes habitat enhancement project

LOVELAND, Colo. — After nearly a two-year delay caused by COVID-19, several Colorado B.A.S.S. Nation clubs ventured out to Boyd Lake to build and place man-made habitat in the Northern Colorado lake Sept. 18.

The team of 28 volunteers from the Denver Bassmasters, Centennial Bass Club, Colorado Kayak Bassmasters and the Loveland Fishing Club, as well as nine Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff members, built 51 man-made trees out of recycled plastic and planted the trees in areas close to spawning locations. The crew also built 10 tree structures that will be placed in Lon Hagler State Wildlife Area.

After placing 16 structures in the lake in 2017, this project on Boyd Lake, located just north of Denver, was approved in May 2019 through the Fishing is Fun in Colorado grant process and was scheduled to take place that year. However, the project could not take place as scheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This is something that Bill Wilson with the Centennial Bass Club started," Colorado Conservation Director George Mauries said. "We did a small project on Boyd before and then Bill went for a grant on this bigger project and [Colorado Parks and Wildlife] allowed us to do it. Boyd is kind of a big bowl with nothing in it. It has a rock dam and weeds. So, when the weeds aren't there, there isn't anything for the fish to congregate on. So, we try to help as much as possible. Most of the man-made lakes [in Colorado] don't have much in them."

With the wide fluctuation of water levels on Boyd Lake, Mauries said the team had to be careful about where they put the new structures so they weren't out of the water at certain times of the year. With the help of local guide Brad Petersen, Mauries said they determined the best areas to put the structures that wouldn't interfere with walleye anglers or shore fisherman.

"Brad is a guide on the lake for every type of species," Mauries said. "He showed me some of the area I wanted to put them at and he said, 'You're going to get the walleye guys in them, and they are going to put their anchors down and yank it out of the way.' We don't need that. We've seen it before in lakes where we put other structures where the shore fishermen would get stuck on them and pull them out."

"So, we picked creek channels, channel swings and inlets that were near spawning flats," Mauries continued. "They let us put them wherever we wanted as long as when the water is down, you aren't going to see them. We picked deep enough water and picked structures that would stay below the surface so nobody would hit them. We put about 10 in each spot so it would actually make a difference."

The final steps of this project will include follow-up with angler surveys and CDOW monitoring and sampling around the structures once they have silted in and become covered with algae growth.

The project was made possible when Mossback Fish Habitat gave a \$1000 discount (through a grant from B.A.S.S. Nation) and matching funds through a USFWS matching grant. Donuts were provided by LaMar's Donuts (Fort Collins) and drinks and chips were furnished by Timnath Walmart Supercenter and by a discount from Silver Mine Subs in Loveland, Colorado. Home Depot in Loveland also donated concrete anchor blocks.

CHRISTOPHER DECKER

YAMAHA RIGHTWATERS BASSMASTER KAYAK SERIES POWERED BY TOURNEYX

Harris Chain of Lakes

Leesburg, Fla. — March 19

For the first time in the young history of the Bassmaster Kayak Series powered by TourneyX, anglers will travel to Florida to tackle the Harris Chain of Lakes, and Bassmaster Elite Series veteran Cliff Prince believes the bass will be in all stages of the spawn when they arrive.

"There should be plenty of grass and the fish should be in all three stages of the spawn," Prince said. "It ought to be really good fishing this time of the year, and with it being a kayak tournament, the Harris Chain has ramps everywhere and they are all pretty convenient."

Known as one of the best big bass venues in the country, the Harris Chain of Lakes has hosted a multitude of major tournaments including a College Series tour stop in January and an Elite Series event in February already this year.

This will be the second regular-season stop of the year for the Kayak Series and the first of three one-day events. At any given one-day bass boat event, Prince said it generally takes 30-plus pounds to win.

During this time of the year, Prince said any of the eight lakes on the chain could produce a winning bag. Each lake sets up a little bit differently and varies in water clarity. Some of the smaller lakes on the Harris Chain like Beauclair and Carlton could be easier for the kayak anglers to break down.

There are several different types of grass the bass will spawn around this time of the year, Prince said.

"A lot of fish spawn in the

Kissimmee grass and a lot of fish spawn on the pads around the bank," the Palatka native said. "Since the hydrilla and eelgrass has started coming back, a lot of those fish spawn offshore. It depends on what they prefer to do. This place is really diverse and you can fish your strengths. It is a really neat place to fish."

Flipping around any type of grass will be a productive pattern for many anglers, Prince said, while a lipless crankbait, ChatterBait and a Carolina rig have historically caught big bags when bass are in and around the spawn.

"If you like flipping and pitching, you can do that," he said. "Then you can throw a lipless and a ChatterBait offshore and maybe even throw a jerkbait if the water is good enough."

Anglers will be able to take off from any public launch and begin fishing at 7:15 a.m. ET. Fishing will conclude at 3:15 p.m. and winners will be announced at 4:45 p.m. at the Venetian Center in Leesburg.

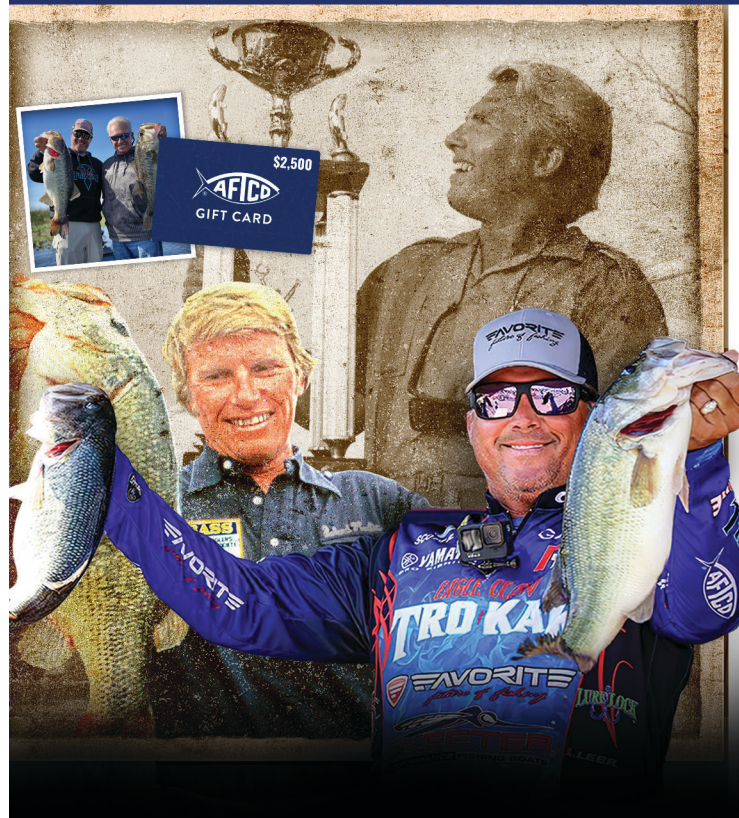
Fans can follow the live leaderboard on Bassmaster.com and TourneyX.com.

CHRISTOPHER DECKER

Fishery Facts

- **Forage:** shad, gizzard shad, shiner, bluegill
- **Surface area:** 75,000 acres
- **Expected visibility:** stained
- **Dominant structure:** lily pads, Kissimmee grass, hydrilla, eelgrass, cypress trees

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